

Houston Zoo Birthday Party FAQs

What is the Zoo's cancellation policy for birthday parties?

The Houston Zoo adheres to a no refund cancellation policy.

How early can we get into the Zoo on the day of our event?

Your birthday party admission tickets are valid for the entire day of your party. You are welcome to enjoy the Zoo all day, but are only permitted in your pavilion during your specified time.

How early can I get into my pavilion to set up?

You are able to get into your pavilion 15 minutes prior to your rental time. You are required to be out no later than 15 minutes after your rental time. Extra time will NOT be allotted for late arrivals so please make sure you are prepared and arrive on time. The Houston Zoo will charge a \$30.00 fee for every 15 minutes that your party exceeds its designated conclusion. The fee will begin 15 minutes after the party's scheduled ending.

Is there a place I can store my items prior to or after my party?

We do not have any storage facilities for food or presents before or after your event. You are welcome to rent or bring a wagon to transport these items.

What happens if it rains?

The Houston Zoo is a rain or shine venue. Parties will take place regardless of weather, unless weather conditions require the entire zoo to close (in which case we would be happy to work with you to reschedule your party).

Can I bring my own food?

You are welcome to bring in any food that does not require any on site preparation. No chafing dishes, hot plates or crock plates are allowed. Food deliveries are not permitted on zoo grounds, but you may meet deliveries outside zoo gates/off zoo grounds. If you choose to use a full service catering company for your event, the outside caterer must be pre-approved by the Houston Zoo at least two weeks prior to party. There will be a 20% charge (applied to the total cost of the catering invoice for the event) paid to the Houston Zoo for the use of any outside catering company.

Do zoo members need a ticket?

Zoo members are not required to have a ticket for your birthday party, they may enter with their membership card.

What is the minimum and maximum number of guests for a party?

There is no minimum number of party guests; however the maximum is 55 people. If you are in need of more space, please contact the Houston Zoo Special Events Department and we can work with you to find a more suitable facility.

Is there a will call where I can leave tickets?

We do not have a will call system; all tickets must be distributed to your guests prior to your event.

What do I do if I have guests that forget their tickets?

You will either have to purchase new tickets for your guests, bring them any extra tickets you may have, or ask them to buy their own tickets. The Special Events Department cannot provide you with any additional tickets on the day of your party. Any additional tickets needed on the day of your party must be purchased through the Admissions Department.

If I do not use all of my tickets, can they be refunded?

Any unused admission or carousel tickets will not be refunded.

What do people usually do during the two hours in their pavilion?

Most people choose to take full advantage of their two hours in the pavilion to visit with guests, eat birthday cake and open gifts. We also have many birthday party additions

available to help structure your time and enhance your event. Please reference the Birthday Party Additions list.

May we bring decorations?

You may bring in decor, but it must be limited to the tops of the tables. You may not hang anything from the walls or the ceiling. Streamers, balloons, confetti, string-a-can, silly string, inflatable's (of any kind), or piñatas, etc. are strictly prohibited.

Can a zoo employee help unload and/or cart items to and from my pavilion?

Houston Zoo staff will NOT be available to meet you at the front entrance or West Gate to help carry/transport any items to your pavilion. You are responsible for transporting these items on your own. We strongly encourage you bring or rent a wagon.

Can I request the animals for my animal experience?

We cannot take requests for specific animals for your experience, guarantee any particular animal will be at your party, or tell you ahead of time which animals will be available.

How do my guests find the party location?

The Houston Zoo Birthday Party Pavilions are located inside the John P. McGovern Children's Zoo. Directions to the pavilion locations can be found on the Houston Zoo map which can be found at the admission gate. Please also feel free to reference a Zoo Ranger or Admissions Staff Member.

I have a guest that has a hard time walking. How do I get them to and from the party?

There are wheel chair rentals located at both entrances of the zoo. Unfortunately, we are not able to provide carts.

Can I bring my own face painter/ airbrush artist?

You are permitted to bring in your own face painter and/or airbrush artist; however you will have to purchase an extra table and two chairs for the artists to use during the event. Your face painter and/or airbrush tattoo artist must park in the main parking lot and must use an admission ticket to enter the zoo.

Will there be a zoo staff member in the pavilion during my party?

Our staff will not be present in the pavilion during the entirety of your party. Staff will check in with you at the pavilion at the beginning of your event to answer any questions and will come and go throughout the remainder of your party.

Can I bring music to my party?

Music is only permitted in the red pavilion.

Do you have plates and utensils for us to use for our party?

If you bring your own food, you are responsible for any knives, plates, forks, napkins, etc. that you may need. If you order catering through the Houston Zoo these items will be provided for you.

What does the scavenger hunt include and will there be a zoo employee to facilitate?

The scavenger hunt is a series of questions that can be answered by walking through the Children's Zoo. Reading is involved, so younger children may need help. The scavenger hunt will be emailed to you upon purchase and will not be facilitated by the Houston Zoo Special Events Staff.

Will you decorate my pavilion?

Given the large number of parties, time constraints, and individual preferences, we do not provide any décor for your event. You are welcome to bring your own. Two great sources for birthday party décor are Oriental Trading and Party City.